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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001699

SIPDIS

OFFICIAL INFORMAL

DEPT FOR SA/INS FROM THE CHARGE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/13/12

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SUBJECT: OFFICIAL INFORMAL NUMBER 129 (09-13-02)

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE LEWIS AMSELEM. REASONS 1.5 B, D.

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REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

11. (C) Try as we might, we have not yet received any Sri Lankan or Maldivian government reaction to President Bush's speech to UNGA yesterday. Regarding international events, it usually takes both governments time to digest things and then develop a response. They are very, very careful and reluctant to stick their necks out. That said, we are pressing them to support our stand re Iraq in public, and reported this yesterday front-channel and will do so again today.

TAYLOR/GOOD VISIT

12. (U) We received the country clearance request for David Good and are sending out the clearance cable today. Polchief Joe Novak will be control officer. We look forward to his visit (has David been here before?) We understand that he will be participating in Amb Taylor's program. (Note: We assume that Amb Taylor's office will be sending out his exact travel info soon.) Charge sent out a cable to Amb Taylor today urging him to visit. (POL)

ATTEMPTED HIJACKING INVESTIGATION

13. (C) We continue to monitor the investigation into the attempted hijacking near the Maldives on 9/9. We received our first troubling indication that those who tried to take over the plane might (repeat might) be Muslims who were using forged Indian passports (with Hindu names). This raises the possibility of Islamic extremism, but it is still just not clear. Our understanding is that the alleged perpetrators remain in detention in the Maldives. DAO is sending out a message re his latest findings today and RSO continues to be in touch with the Maldivian police re the incident. (POL)

CBK'S HARSH LETTER

14. (C) President Kumaratunga fired off a letter to the GSL late yesterday demanding that the government negotiating team take a hard-line with the LTTE during the upcoming talks. She demanded that the GSL complain about LTTE ceasefire violations, among other things. (Note: Based on what have heard from the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, there have not in fact been any serious violations of the ceasefire of late, although there have been some smaller incidents that it is reviewing with the parties.) One of the things Kumaratunga is not happy with is that the GSL has apparently not acceded to her wish to place a PA rep on the negotiating team. We have spoken to the GSL about this matter (just asking them for the facts) and it has indicated that putting a PA rep on the team would be unwieldy and make the negotiations much more complex. Of course, the LTTE would not accept any meeting with the most likely PA rep, former FM Kadirgamar, whom they despise as a "turncoat" Tamil. (POL)

ICC ARTICLE 98

15. (SBU) Thanks for your cogent update re the ICC Article 98 review. (POL)

BIG CRICKET TOURNAMENT

16. (U) Just want to flag that there is a huge cricket tournament taking place in Colombo that began yesterday and will go on for the next ten days. (Note: We are not sure exactly why, but cricket is like a religion here.) All the world's best teams are in town (Australia, India,

South Africa, etc.). Sri Lanka clobbered Pakistan last night. The fact that such a big tourney is taking place in SL is being taken by many Sri Lankans as another sign that their isolation and self-marginalization because of the war is gradually abating. (POL)

AMSELEM